

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 279 475

RC 016 147

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TITLE Cooling Down the Melting Pot: Bilingualism and Multiculturalism. Harvesting the Harvesters. Book 10.
INSTITUTION State Univ. of New York, Potsdam. Coll. at Potsdam.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC.; New York State Education Dept., Albany. Bureau of Migrant Education.
PUB DATE Oct 86
NOTE 17p.; For related documents, see RC 016 138-146. Photographs may not reproduce clearly.
AVAILABLE FROM School of Professional Studies, Potsdam College, Potsdam, NY 13676.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Biculturalism; *Bilingual Education; *Bilingualism; Correspondence Study; Cultural Differences; Educational Needs; Elementary Secondary Education; Language Proficiency; Limited English Speaking; *Migrant Children; *Migrant Education; Politics of Education; Public Opinion; *Teacher Education; Teaching Methods; Units of Study
IDENTIFIERS Melting Pot; Migrant Educators National Training OutReach

ABSTRACT

The tenth of a series of 10 study units for a Migrant Educators' National Training OutReach (MENTOR) correspondence course discusses issues of bilingualism and multiculturalism as they relate to migrant students. Designed for use in preservice or inservice teacher education, the unit explores the metaphor and myth of the Melting Pot, legal and political dimensions of bilingualism and dual cultures, and definitions of bilingualism and limited English proficiency. It relates to migrant education the language development theory of James Cummins that there are two levels of language proficiency--one, involving use of language in social settings, informal situations, and with friends; the other, the language required by academic exercises and restricted to classrooms--and suggests ways to incorporate this theory into migrant education curriculum. Excerpts from books and research reports: illustrate creative bilingual programs, ethnic diversity, and class strife; encourage respect for cultural identities of all students; and offer perspectives on national policy issues concerning migrants. A 46-item list of readings and other resources and a list of state offices of migrant education are included. (LFL)

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BOOK 10

HARVESTING the HARVESTERS

COOLING DOWN THE MELTING POT Bilingualism and Multiculturalism

October 1986

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Culture and language are problems or handicaps only when the school fails to see them as assets and fails to capitalize on them as sources for learning and intellectual development.

Gloria Zamora

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**MENTOR is a 143 Project supported by the U.S. Department of Education in
conjunction with the New York State Education Department.**

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MENTOR wishes to thank the hundreds of people who volunteered to help the project with advice, encouragement, materials, and expertise of all sorts.

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MENTOR wishes to thank the dozens of people at Potsdam College whose help was invaluable.

Clifton Wharton
Chancellor
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America is God's crucible, the great melting pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming.

Israel Zangwill,
The Melting Pot (1908)

The Melting Pot: Metaphor and Myth

The Melting Pot is one of the powerful metaphors in the American consciousness. It vies with the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny as one of the major metaphors we use to explain our heritage. There is truth in it, too. Despite our racial discrimination and ethnic antagonisms, American life provides powerful incentives for cultural homogenization. Study after study has shown that second and third generation immigrants, while retaining some characteristics of their cultural background, are more similar to the American norm than they are to the culture in their original land. This seems to be as true for Hispanics and Asians, the most recent arrivals, as it was for earlier immigrants.

The power of the metaphor turned it into an American myth, a belief so basic it affects the way we live. As such, it sometimes generated among extremists the notion that everyone *ought* to assimilate as rapidly as possible, to shed everything that evoked alien cultures. This was a pernicious idea, sensibly rejected by recent generations determined to preserve what was best in their ancestral heritages even as they merged into the American mainstream.

Whether you believe America ought to be a melting pot or not, it is. Schools and television and movies and advertising and peer pressures to conform all work to make us more and more alike. Indeed, American culture is so powerful that rock music and blue jeans and other American fads and fancies and fashions tend to Americanize the whole world. But this is simply a fact of life, the way things are, not necessarily a value judgment about the way things ought to be. Groups and individuals often resist pressures to alter traditional values, and our heritage of cultural pluralism and diversity demands that we respect their adherence to their values. The American ideal is mutual respect for our various cultural backgrounds, not the creation of ersatz Anglo-Saxons.

Many of the migrant children arrive at schools speaking very little English. The best techniques for teaching them are expensive and politically divisive. Everyone agrees that the goal of the schools is the mastery of English, but there has been angry disagreement about how to accomplish it.

Beyond the Melting Pot

Bilingualism is a complicated issue pedagogically, a controversial one politically. A consensus exists among Migrant Educators in favor of instruction in the ancestral tongue until a complete mastery of English has been attained, this to be done in a context which respects and reinforces the traditional culture and values associated with the original language. Migrant Educators argue that cultural pluralism is an integral part of the American heritage.

Not everyone agrees. Some complain that bilingual instruction is too expensive, creating a system within a system. Some complain that advocates of bilingualism have hidden agendas, that they seek to preserve the traditional language and culture to protect their own bureaucratic or political turf. A few critics of bilingualism even argue that their own ancestors were forced to sink-or-swim in English as part of the assimilation process and that new immigrants must do the same. Migrant Educators cannot afford to dismiss these notions. Not everyone who opposes bilingual teaching techniques is either a fool or a knave. We must consider the opposition to bilingualism on its merits, and must appreciate the dynamics of the debate as we seek to establish the validity of our own positions.

Ethnic and class antagonisms are factors which complicate the problems of Migrant Education. We will look at the tensions which arise from conflicting goals. If one places economic success at the top of the list of priorities, then it is possible to argue that every student must master the middle class skills and values required by the business community, even at the loss of some cultural identity. If economic success is only one of the goals of education, perhaps it is not necessary to aim for homogenized graduating classes all of whom are equipped to climb the corporate ladder toward executive positions. While that overstates the case, it illustrates the dilemma: the United States is so pluralistic that we do not have a single homogenous culture to perpetuate through

our schools. Some feel that we *ought* to have such a homogenous culture, based on the English language (and perhaps on British traditions and Christianity), while others feel our true greatness has been our ability to tolerate diversity while gaining strength and vitality from successive waves of newcomers. (Native Americans, Blacks, and Hispanics have been here longer than most of, say, the Irish or Italians, but for a variety of reasons some from these groups are only now entering the mainstream of American political and economic life, and only recently finding their specific needs addressed by the schools).

None of these issues is unique to Migrant Education. Bilingualism and multiculturalism are issues that concern our major urban centers where many students have never seen a large garden, much less a huge corporate farm with migrant labor camps. Migrant Education is not a separate, singular endeavor but an essential element of a larger commitment to provide every American with the best possible education.

With the possible exception of desegregation, no subject has aroused as much passion over schools as educating students with "limited English proficiency."

Edward B. Fiske

The *New York Times* devoted the bulk of its Fall 1985 Survey of Education supplement to the issue of bilingualism. The quote above is from the cover story. Here is another quote from the same article:

Running through these issues are fundamental questions that go well beyond the educational task of public schools to the kind of nation they serve. "Bilingual education has become a code word to larger social tensions in the nation as a whole," said Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. "Schools are the battleground for the issue of whether the nation can once again embrace a new group of immigrants whose native language is not English."

Until quite recently public education in the United States was "monolingual." English was the universal language of instruction, and even newly arrived immigrants were expected to use their new national tongue on a "sink or swim" basis. Many swam, and many

also sank.

This is not an abstract or conceptual issue. Millions, even billions of dollars are at stake, and with them jobs, prestige, clout, patronage and the whole panoply of considerations. Here is an excerpt from the *Times* article "The Politics of Bilingualism" by Larry Rohter:

To the antibilingual activists, this smacks of patronage and the growth of a costly and inefficient "Bilingual support" industry. They argue that the rise of bilingual education has created a demand for bilingual publishing materials, consultants, certifying boards and administrators, who they say have a vested interest in maintaining bilingual programs, even when they may not be needed.

"This thing is definitely seen as a pipeline to Federal money," Mrs. Bikales said. "The attitude is that 'this is our little pot of gold, our little preserve'."

For their part, backers of bilingual education charge the Reagan Administration is trying to strangle the program financially.

They say claims that bilingual education has failed result in part from the fact that there is not enough money to reach all the children who need such programs.

Heated California Issue

More than twenty states have legislation promoting some form of bilingual education, but the debate is most heated in California, with its huge Hispanic and Asian populations.

"It's a big business in this state," Mr. Rossier said. "Chicano politicians see bilingual education as a big issue and feel it is going to control their political destinies for years."

"There is a tremendous amount of empire building going on," Mr. Rossier added. "These people want to continue this sort of thing and will do anything to hold on to what they've got."

Mr. Lyons, on the other hand, accuses the antibilingual lobby of trying to arouse "nativist passions in a lot of communities, not so much in the schools as on elected boards of education." In the process, he and other bilingual-education proponents say genuine pedagogical concerns end up being submerged by fear of foreigners and by political opportunism.

"It's an opportunity to scare the local yokels," Mr. Martinez said. "It makes

good headlines everywhere."

But both sides agree that as the debate rages on, the problems continue to grow.

"In spite of all this discussion, people are moving into urban areas," Mr. Martinez said. "They show up on your doorstep, and you have to do something about it. There are hundreds of thousands of kids who can't understand English, so what are you going to do?"

Bilingualism: The Legal Dimension

Bilingualism is not merely a good idea whose time has come. It is the law. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as interpreted in the Supreme Court's *Lau v. Nichols* decision in 1974, children have a right to understand the language of instruction. The 1964 Act guarantees equal educational opportunity for all students and a 1970 HEW policy statement said districts must "take affirmative steps to rectify language deficiencies which have the effect of excluding the national-origin minority children from participation in the educational program offered."

Kinney Lau, a Chinese-American student, sued the San Francisco school system because he could not understand the language of instruction. In 1974, the Supreme Court said Lau had a right to understand the language of instruction but did not mandate whether the district should teach him English before forcing him to take other courses or teach him in Chinese or some other alternative.

Between 1975 and 1981, when the Reagan Administration took over, many districts signed consent decrees under guidelines for "Lau remedies." In February 1981 Secretary of Education Terrel Bell withdrew the Lau guidelines as too "prescriptive." No alternative standards have been issued. Enforcement of Lau has ceased, and the current Secretary of Education William Bennett has said he favors maximum flexibility for each district to solve the problem in its own way.

Cynthia G. Brown, former Director of O.C.R., says the children are caught in the middle of this acrimonious political squabble. "It's tragic that this policy debate focuses less on kids who are having trouble in school than on the issue of where the country is going in a language sense. Senior officials of the

Education Department know there are serious needs not being met, but they aren't willing to take on the politics of groups like U.S. English, which regards bilingualism as divisive. It's time for the leadership of the Department to focus back on the people in need, the LEP children."

This issue will not resolve itself soon. There are thousands of districts nationwide with LEP students. Statistics suggest that up to 60% of the districts monitored by O.C.S. may be in noncompliance. Nobody knows about the rest of the districts not monitored. What we know is that many LEP students are not getting the help they need and deserve. Migrant Educators must advocate for adequate language programs for all their students. While the political wrangling goes on, we must find ways to communicate with students in languages they understand while teaching them English so they can communicate with the majority of their fellow Americans.

The Politics of Bilingualism

This controversy is often discussed with educational jargon and research statistics but at decision-making levels where policy is established it is political, a question of power, of winners and losers. It is a fact that organized education lobbies such as the National Education Association openly endorsed Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale, while Ronald Reagan received very little support from Black or Hispanic voting blocs. Reagan's constituency includes large corporate agricultural interests and conservative groups whose ideology is tingled by nativism. It should come as no surprise that the Reagan Administration places a low budget priority on bilingualism. As the Fiske article puts it, "Bilingual-education forces, however, charge that the Administration's proposals are a smokescreen for its real goal of cutting back on bilingual education."

All educators recognize that the schools are not immune from the vagaries and vicissitudes of political change. It has been difficult for Migrant Educators to maintain continuity within the very programs intended to provide continuity for the migrants. It is important for us as Migrant Educators to contribute to an atmosphere of civility and mutual tolerance during this ongoing debate, and not to become self-

righteous. Change is a constant factor in political life. We must adjust with grace.

Migrant Educators need not retreat from their conviction that bilingual techniques work best. This is from the *Times* article supporting bilingualism, by Angelo Gonzales:

As Jim Cummins of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has argued, the use and development of the native language makes an essential contribution to the development of minority children's subject-matter knowledge and academic learning potential. In fact, at least three national data bases—the National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Educational Statistics-High School and Beyond Studies, and the Survey of Income and Education—suggest that there are long-term positive effects among high school students who have participated in bilingual-education programs. These students are achieving higher scores on tests of verbal and mathematics skills.

These and similar findings buttress the argument stated persuasively in the recent joint recommendation of the Academy for Educational Development and the Hazen Foundation, namely, that America needs to become a more multilingual nation and children who speak a non-English language are a national resource to be nurtured in school.

When one moves beyond pedagogy into politics, however, the issue grows so complicated that there is no consensus even within the Hispanic community. Richard Rodriguez wrote an anti-bilingualism article for the *Times* supplement in which he accused backers of bilingualism with having a hidden culturo-political agenda based on what he calls middle class romanticism, a desire by better-off Hispanics to prove that one can be both American and non-American simultaneously. Rodriguez argues that the real needs of working class Hispanics to master English and join the mainstream are sacrificed:

No one will say it in public; in private, Hispanics argue with me about bilingual education and every time it comes down to memory. Everyone remembers going to that grammar school where students were slapped for speaking Spanish. Childhood memory is offered as parable; the memory is meant to compress the gringo's long history of

offenses against Spanish, Hispanic culture, Hispanics.

It is no coincidence that, although all of America's ethnic groups are implicated in the policy of bilingual education, Hispanics, particularly Mexican-Americans, have been its chief advocates. The English words used by Hispanics in support of bilingual education are words such as "dignity," "heritage," "culture." Bilingualism becomes a way of exacting from gringos a grudging admission of contrition—for the 19th century theft of the Southwest, the relegation of Spanish to a foreign tongue, the injustice of history. At the extreme, Hispanic bilingual enthusiasts demand that public schools "maintain" a student's sense of separateness.

Hispanics may be among the last groups of Americans who still believe in the 1960's. Bilingual-education proposals still serve the romance of that decade, especially of the late 60's, when the heroic black civil rights movement grew paradoxically wedded to its opposite—the ethnic revival movement. Integration and separatism merged into twin, possible goals.

With integration, the black movement inspired middle-class Americans to imitations—the Hispanic movement; the Gray Panthers; feminism; gay rights. Then there was withdrawal, with black glamour leading a romantic retreat from the anonymous crowd.

Americans came to want it both ways. They wanted in and they wanted out. Hispanics took to celebrating their diversity, joined other Americans in dancing rings around the melting pot.

Mythic Metaphors

More intently than most, Hispanics wanted the romance of their dual cultural allegiance backed up by law. Bilingualism became proof that one could have it both ways, could be a full member of public America and yet also separate, private, Hispanic. "Spanish" and "English" became mythic metaphors, like country and city, describing separate islands of private and public life.

Ballots, billboards, and, of course, classrooms in Spanish. For nearly two decades now, middle-class Hispanics have had it their way. They have foisted a neat ideological scheme on working-class children. What they want to believe about themselves, they wait for the child to prove; that it is possible to be two, that one can assume the public language (the public life) of

America, even while remaining what one was, existentially separate.

Pain and Guilt

I was that child! I faced the stranger's English with pain and guilt and fear. Baptized to English in school, at first I felt myself drowning—the ugly sounds forced down my throat—until slowly, slowly (held in the tender grip of my teachers), suddenly the conviction took: English was my language to use.

What I yearn for is some candor from those who speak about bilingual education. Which of its supporters dares speak of the price a child pays—the price of adulthood—to make the journey from a working-class home into a middle-class schoolroom? The real story, the silent story of the immigrant child's journey is one of embarrassments in public; betrayal of all that is private; silence of home; and at school the hand tentatively raised.

Bilingual enthusiasts bespeak an easier world. They seek a linguistic solution to a social dilemma. They seem to want to believe that there is an easy way for the child to balance private and public, in order to believe that there is some easy way for themselves.

Ten years ago, I started writing about the ideological implications of bilingual education. Ten years from now some newspaper may well invite me to contribute another Sunday supplement essay on the subject. The debate is going to continue. The bilingual establishment is now inside the door. Jobs are at stake. Politicians can only count heads; growing numbers of Hispanics will insure the compliance of politicians.

Publicly, we will continue the fiction. We will solemnly address this issue as an educational question, a matter of pedagogy. But privately, Hispanics will still seek from bilingual education an admission from the gringo that Spanish has value and presence. Hispanics of middle class will continue to seek the romantic assurances of separateness. Experts will argue. Dark-eyed children will sit in the classroom. Mute.

A similar debate has raged within the Black community, with some arguing for the legitimacy of a Black idiom even if it defied traditional grammar while others insisted that only Standard English is acceptable at the higher levels of business and the professions, and that anything else shortchanged Black students by denying them ready access to arenas where only formally correct

usage will do.

This issue will not go away because language and identity are so closely entwined as to be inseparable. To some, "sink-or-swim" programs in Standard English are the best route to economic progress for non-English speakers; to others, "sink-or-swim" programs are educationally indefensible since too many sink when forced to learn in a language they do not understand. Beyond this is a question of non-material values: is it worth risking your cultural identity and with it your ties to family and community, to have a slightly better chance to get entry-level jobs in the civil service? Or, to put it the other way, is it worth retaining your ancestral culture at the risk of remaining in the fields or factories? The rhetorical questions oversimplify the choice, but they describe the dynamic accurately, at least the dynamic of the public debate.

Defining Biligualism

The Secretary of Education, the Honorable William Bennett, stirred up a hornet's nest of controversy when he suggested that local schools determine how to deal with students speaking languages other than English. In fact, many programs can be "bilingual." Gloria Zamora divided them into four sorts about a dozen years ago:

Investigation of bilingual/bicultural programs throughout the United States reveals a wide philosophical difference.

1. There are those programs that use the dominant language only as a "bridge" to help the child move into English as quickly as possible.
2. There are programs that look upon bilingual education strictly as an oral language development program, with heavy emphasis on ESL.
3. There are programs that translate the existing English curriculum into the home language and call it bilingual education. Perhaps it is bilingual, but it is no better than what we had before and it definitely is not bicultural.
4. There are programs that utilize the dominant language to stimulate cognitive development, extend the knowledge and use of the mother tongue and develop the knowledge and use of the second language, English—all of this enhancing the self-concept because the program treats the culture and home language of the students as positives.

Migrant Educators mean the fourth model when they speak of Bilingualism, which explains why they add Biculturalism or Multiculturalism to the term. Gloria Zamora:

Bilingual/Bicultural Education serves as a positive response to the need for equal educational opportunity for the thousands of children in the United States whose first language is other than English.

In the 60's when the first national efforts to initiate bilingual education programs in the United States were made, our children were called "culturally disadvantaged" and their home language was called a "problem" or a "handicap."

Many people still consider Spanish, or French, or Chinese, or any language other than English a "handicap." Culture and language are problems or handicaps only when the school fails to see them as assets and fails to capitalize upon them as sources for learning and intellectual development.

Limited English Proficiency

Let us step away from volatile politics for a moment, to consider classroom reality. A majority of migrant children are LEP, limited in their English proficiency. Dr. Michael Reed of the Pennsylvania Migrant Office suggests that we apply the principles of Dr. James Cummins to the classroom:

The Premise

Traditional classroom approaches have many positive points to offer in terms of intellectual development of the majority of our children. However, these traditional approaches do exhibit some shortcomings with respect to instruction for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. The majority of our migrant children are LEP.

Definition of Limited English Proficiency

An English language deficiency, whether apparent or not, which prevents a student from being on an equal social or academic footing with his or her native language peers.

A Brief Theoretical Background Supporting the Premise

The language development theory of James Cummins from the Toronto

Institute of Language has enjoyed tremendous popularity among educators of LEP students in this country. Cummins proposes that there are, in fact, two levels of language proficiency. The first one, which he calls BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills), involves the use of language in social settings, informal situations and with friends. The second level of language proficiency, termed CALP (Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency), is the language required by academic exercises and is restricted to the classroom. Cummins claims that the two levels of proficiency are qualitatively different. That is, the type of language demanded in the two levels of proficiency show stark differences which can be observed and categorized. CALP skills are not always readily apparent and often overlooked when assessing the language proficiency of a child.

How Does This Concept of Language Proficiency Relate to Migrant Children

The concept is extremely relevant because language dominance tests like the LAS (Language Assessment Scale) are measuring only the BICS skills of a child. It is popularly assumed that, if a migrant child can converse reasonably well with an adult, knows the basic vocabulary and syntax of English, and can perform well on the grammar portions of such tests, then he or she should be exited from any ESL type of program. Language proficiency in English, it is commonly felt, is no longer an issue. It is simultaneously assumed that these BICS skills will provide everything necessary for success in the classroom.

The Cummins model, however, predicts differently. Since the language skills demanded in an academic environment versus those involved in social settings (similar to those tapped in language dominance tests) are significantly different from the type of proficiency measured in an assessment like the LAS, the tests may not be adequate to guarantee success in the classroom. Many educational programs may be prematurely 'exiting' children from language development programs and sending them on to academic challenges in English for which they are not prepared.

This phenomenon does in fact seem to

be occurring in numerous school districts across the state and the nation. Many migrant children and other LEP students can converse easily in English with their peers and with teachers, and therefore are expected to perform up to par with their native English speaking peers. However, every site director can document scores of migrant children who have some oral English proficiency (BICS), yet never seem to be able to equal the academic achievement of the general population. This theory of language proficiency offers a valid explanation.

The Cummins model suggests that an LEP child will need three to five years of extra help to acquire the academic language skills which will enable him or her to compete on an equal basis.

How Can Anyone Suggest That School Room Language is Significantly Different From Non-Classroom Language?

This idea does not derive its support from intuition or conjecture. Basically, linguists have taped and studied language samples from different environments before drawing such a conclusion. Below are listed the major differences between the two types of language along with some brief explanations.

Social Language (where BICS is used is:

2. HIGHLY CONTEXTUALIZED

Academic Language (where CALP is used) is:

1. LOW IN CONTEXTUALIZATION

COMMENT: The language used in social settings usually is focused around physical items or matters which are observable, 'touchable' or of high psychological interest to a child. Let's take the example of a group of children who are trying to explain the rules of baseball to a child who has just arrived from Poland. The child would most likely be at the ball park. The new child can see the field, bases and players in their positions. He can become physically involved and has a high motivation to learn because understanding the game will undoubtedly affect his performance.

On the other hand, take a typical classroom discussion on astronomy. The discussion might begin with Gali-

leo. None of the children have ever seen this person and many cannot relate him to their immediate world. The teacher might then proceed to a discussion of celestial bodies which, for the most part, will never be observed by the children. The distances and sizes of objects cannot be easily conceptualized. Thus, the whole exercise has involved items out of context, in abstract terms. Other than the academic rewards, there is little motivation for the child to learn.

Social Language is:

2. LESS COMPLEX
SYNTACTICALLY

Academic Language is:

2. MORE COMPLEX
SYNTACTICALLY

COMMENT: Classroom language uses many more types of sentence structure. These usually range beyond the syntactic complexity of social language. Sentences in written form tend to be longer and involve more dependent clauses, imbedded sentences, distant references, etc. You can easily verify this to yourself by taping the conversation of a 12 year old and comparing the text to a 7th grade reader.

Social Language is:

3. REDUCED IN VOCABULARY

Academic Language is:

3. COMPLEX IN VOCABULARY

COMMENT: Classroom language involves the use of more vocabulary items and in addition these words tend to involve complex issues which are often abstract in nature.

Social Language is:

4. HIGH IN VERBALITY

Academic Language is:

4. LOW IN VERBALITY

COMMENT: Classroom teachers are often surprised to learn how little each child says during the course of a typical day. In a typical hour, some children may utter no more than 10 or 12 words; others may say nothing at all. There can be no comparison between this situation and the opportunity for expression found in a social environment. The output during a five minute span for a typical child in a social setting often surpasses the output for an entire day in school.

How Can This Knowledge Be Incorporated into a Curriculum For Migrant Children?

Teachers should be cognizant of four general principles of instruction which have been promoted by the leading researchers in order to help the LEP child gain the cognitive skills they need without placing them at a disadvantage due to any English language limitations. It is interesting to note that these principles are applicable to instruction of all children, not just LEP. The four principles are:

1. Each child must be afforded a greater opportunity to express himself orally in the classroom. This does not diminish the importance of the teacher. It is recognized that a 'model' English speaker is necessary for the children. The teacher, in essence, becomes the model. However, the teacher no longer constitutes the center of the learning activity, as is the case in most traditional classroom settings. The learning activity must be designed so as to



have the children doing the exploration and self-teaching (mostly orally) once the teacher has provided necessary orientation and background.

2. The activities must involve "Real Language." The question and answer type of response which characterizes most traditional classroom settings does not constitute "real language" according to almost all researchers. This conclusion is formulated on the knowledge that there is no equivalent for the type of language generated in the classroom with any type of language observed outside the school. By having the children talking among themselves, and not responding with quick answers to questions posed by a teacher, real language can be generated in the classroom.
3. The children must assume responsibility for their own learning. Through the completion of the learning activities, each child must come to realize that failure to do one's part has consequences in terms of the progress of others. A child must be held responsible by his peers for completing some task which affects others in the class.
4. The learning situation must be highly contextualized, but at the same time, in order to move the child forward intellectually, it must be cognitively demanding. The learning situation should involve tasks which have something in common with the world of the child. The tasks should, whenever possible, involve real objects, real problems and real people. The learning situation should not be watered down intellectually. It should involve the use of all the basic skills in some manner which entails critical thinking or problem solving. Children who are not challenged will not learn to handle similar cognitive tasks which are common in the decontextualized exercises of traditional classrooms.

What is an Example of a Learning Activity Which Incorporates All These Concepts?

The following represents one among a million activities which embodies these four principles.

A group of five migrant children is assigned the task of composing a letter to be sent via modem, i.e., electronically,

to some migrant pen pals in Florida. The group must discuss and write two opening paragraphs which describe the community in which they live. In addition, each of the five must describe himself in a paragraph to be included in the letter.

One Program in Action

Here is the transcript of a segment of the McNeill/Lehrer Newshour from January 15, 1986, which dealt with the Bilingual program at the Eastman Avenue elementary school in East Los Angeles.

Learning the Language

MacNeil: Recently Education Secretary William Bennett has reopened the long debate about how best to educate children who don't speak English. Bennett advocates more flexibility in the way school districts handle such programs. The Los Angeles school district has embarked on an experiment in bilingual education that has broad support and appears to work. Our report is by Jeffrey Kaye of public station KCET.

Jeffrey Kaye, KCET/voice-over/: In the predominantly Mexican-American barrio of East Los Angeles, the operative language is Spanish. Here, without knowing English, you can function but not easily prosper. This is the poorest area of Los Angeles. The school dropout rate is the highest, a fact sometimes blamed on failings in bilingual education. Angelina Vera speaks only Spanish to her four children. Her oldest, Sandra, aged 11, speaks English fluently. She learned it in school. [interviewing] Did you speak any English when you went to school?

Sandra Vera: No, I didn't know—barely, not a lot.

Kaye: How do you talk to your mother and how do you talk to your father?

Ms. Vera: Well, I just talk Spanish.

Kaye: [voice-over]: Five-year-old Alma Vera is just starting school. She speaks little English, but she's learning.

Alma Vera: Hello, everybody, yes indeed, yes indeed, yes indeed,

Students [singing]: "Hello, everybody, yes indeed, yes indeed, yes indeed, my darling."

Kaye: [voice-over]: Alma attends kindergarten at the Eastman Avenue elementary school in East Los Angeles. It's the same school her sisters attend, one of many that cater to L.A.'s

134,000 non-English-speaking students. This school is trying an unusual experiment in bilingual education, one that appears to be working. Most schools with bilingual education programs require their teachers to teach in two languages, to translate as they go along. Not at Eastman. Here, Principal Mirta Gonzalez Feinberg oversees a program where classes are conducted in either Spanish or English. Unlike other schools, Eastman doesn't turn subjects like math and science into simultaneous English lessons. English is taught separately. Then, grade by grade, English replaces Spanish in all subjects.

Mirta Gonzalez Feinberg, Eastman Principal: We feel that if we use the child's language to give him the greatest amount of opportunity to learn, while simultaneously assuring that that child learns English and learns it as best as possible, that we should end up with a child in the sixth grade who not only knows English well but also has developmental skills, has all the academic subject matter that is required.

Kaye [voice-over]: This is how Eastman does it. When children first enter the school in kindergarten or first grade, their language skills are tested. They are separated according to their proficiency in English. Those who speak only Spanish are placed in classes where most of the instruction is in that language. Here Alma Vera is taught important concepts—square, circle, triangle—in Spanish. She will eventually also learn such basic subjects as reading, writing, math and science in Spanish. Alma is starting to learn English in her non-academic lessons such as music, art and physical education. The idea is an old one. Children learn a language by being forced to speak it.

Ms. Feinberg: But it's also to be sure that the children have, early on, a lot of opportunities to hear English in non-threatening situations where it isn't a matter that they have a test to pass tomorrow, for example, as you would have in science or math.

Kaye [voice-over]: Here bilingual teacher Pauline Griffith teaches second-graders English. The method is not to teach grammar but to teach the language in an informal, conversational way. She sees an advantage to teaching a class of children whose language abilities are the same.

Ms. Pauline Griffith, teacher: If I have

English-speaking children and Spanish-speaking children in my class, then I would have to do my lessons in both languages in order to reach the children. And so then there are days when I go—you know, I used to go home and I used to say, well, I didn't reach my children today or I didn't have time to work with a group of children because I didn't have time for my lessons. And I used—it releases me of a lot of anxiety that way, and stress.

Kaye [voice-over]: Eastman school officials are mindful that segregating children by language ability has its disadvantages. One class can see another as inferior. Eastman tries to prevent problems by combining some non-academic classes for part of the day. These mixed classes are taught in English. In this fourth-grade class Eileen Swete teaches students who are both fluent and not so fluent in English. Maria Vera, who takes most of her classes in English, is here with children from a Spanish-speaking class.

Eileen Swete, teacher: The object is for them to speak and converse also with their neighbor in English. If I hear them speaking in Spanish, I'll say, "Why are you here for this period of time? We need to speak in English."

Kaye [voice-over]: And this is where the Spanish and English come together, though not at the same time. This is Grace Rose's fifth-grade social studies class. On this day Mrs. Rose teaches her class about the American colonies. The lesson is all in Spanish, no English. The very next day Grace Rose is back at the same map, teaching the same lesson in English. This class is where students start to make the transition to all-English lessons.

Grace Rose, teacher: Yesterday we talked impuestos, all right? What are impuestos?

Student: Taxes

Ms. Rose: Taxes. Absolutely.

Kaye: [voice-over]: From what we could see, most of the class seemed ready to absorb the material in English. They could understand the teacher, although some students couldn't always express themselves.

Ms. Rose: What were they trying to tell the English? (Arturo answers in Spanish) Okay, who can tell me what Arturo is trying to say? Adrian?

Adrian: He's trying to say they wouldn't get the money.

Ms. Rose: We do social studies in

Spanish three times a week and then two days we expand in English. Most of our day, all the directions and any conversation that I have with the children is in English unless it's a matter of life and death or something that the child definitely wants to use Spanish. Then we use Spanish. But most of the time they use English.

Kaye: By the sixth grade children who were once separated in Spanish speaking classes are mixed in with those who speak only English.

Teacher: And why on earth was this boy named Patch? How did he get the name?

Kaye: All Sandra Vera's classes are conducted in English. Like her youngest sister, she once spoke only Spanish. Now she is encouraged to participate in Spanish-language activities because the school doesn't want her to lose her Spanish skills, but none of her instruction is in Spanish. The Los Angeles school district as well as state officials are in the process of evaluating Eastman's experiment, now two years old. Preliminary results indicate that Eastman students do better on standardized tests than children at neighboring bilingual schools. L.A. school officials are impressed enough with Eastman that members of the school board, liberals and conservatives alike, recently voted unanimously to try the Eastman approach in seven other elementary schools in the area. Board member Larry Gonzalez led the effort to expand the Eastman experiment.

Larry Gonzalez, school board member: The self-esteem is very high amongst the student body in this school because many children are now becoming that much more successful in learning. Children are not failing in the areas of academics and in other areas of their educational life. Children are being successful, and success breeds success.

Kaye: Even with the limited success Eastman has shown, for children like Sandra, Maria and Alma Vera the future is uncertain. Given their neighborhood and background, the chances are 50/50 that they will drop out before they finish high school, according to the statistics. Their mother, Angelina, believes her children will beat those odds, in part because of Eastman.

Angelina Vera: They are doing well. I have compared them with some of the children, my sister's children, and my

children are doing better.

Kaye: While L.A. officials seem ready to accept limited success at Eastman, there is no intention to modify the entire school district. Eastman's experiment is designed for its homogeneous Spanish-speaking student body. But every day Los Angeles schools must accommodate students who speak neither Spanish nor English but 87 other languages and dialects. Nonetheless, for the 115,000 Spanish-speaking students in Los Angeles, the Eastman model is promising, and officials here and throughout the country are watching it closely.

This was not news to Migrant Educators in 1986, nor is the need limited to California. Here is a quote from Alvin Hicks, Principal of the May Roberts Elementary School in Ontario, Oregon:

Both a well-planned English program and a well-planned bilingual program are necessary. The children need to be helped in their native language as well as to be taught English. They must speak Spanish at home, of course, in order to communicate with their parents. But being able to communicate better with their family is not the main purpose of having a good bilingual program. The main reason to incorporate bilingual instruction is to help these children develop concepts according to their innate ability rather than according to their ability to speak English.

Ethnic Diversity

Migrant Educators are universal in their support of a cultural pluralism that would respect ethnic differences, as essential to the self-esteem of the individual and as healthy for the nation as a whole.

In recognizing the legitimacy of ethnic and racial diversity, we must not fall into the trap of stereotyping. Many students and observers stress that the United States is far more homogenous than many of us recognize. Irish-Americans in Ireland and Black Americans in Africa are immediately struck by how American they are, despite the affinity they feel for their ancestral roots. Parisians say they can always recognize an American, but that it is harder to know whether he hails from Argentina or New Jersey. We in America are attuned to small differences that escape foreigners, who find that our schools and our media have done a

remarkable job in homogenizing us.

An ERIC Fact Sheet stresses that traditional differences between Anglo and Hispanic cultures are less than commonly acknowledged and lessening fast under the onslaught of pressures to assimilate:

The sociology of knowledge reminds us "that thinking is not an autonomous mental activity, explicable only in terms of categories like mind or reason, but an activity that takes place under determinate social and cultural conditions." In applying this idea to Hispanic people, therefore, it is necessary to understand their social and cultural experiences, insights which can be gleaned from both the social sciences and literature. It is probably accurate to state that values are the most important shared dimension of a culture and as Rokeach writes: "An adult probably has tens of thousands of beliefs, thousands of attitudes, but only dozens of values."

Are there value differentiations that separate the Hispanic from the Anglo? There are not too many value differentiations that separate the Hispanic from the Anglo. In his study of north-central New Mexico, Eastman learned that "Spanish-Americans were found to have first-order (i.e., dominant) orientations stressing: (1) subjugation to nature; (2) present orientations; (3) "being" activity; and (4) individualism. Orientations in the dominant Anglo society stress: (1) mastery over nature; (2) future orientations; (3) "doing" activity; and (4) individualism."

However, in examining the first national study of Mexican Americans (Grebler, Moore, and Guzman, 1970, ch. 24), we note that Mexican Americans are both the oldest and the newest minority in the United States, that they are not predominantly urban, and that they have increased both their number of middle-class persons and their interaction with Anglos. Their family and marriage patterns are increasingly similar to that of the rest of the population (e.g., very rarely do Mexican Americans live in an extended family household, the husbands are less dominant, and the wives are less submissive than they were previously). Also, their values related to work, individual achievement, and goals for their children are very similar to those in the dominant society. They are not opposed to getting socially involved with Anglos, "and about 25 per cent of the Spanish-

surnamed persons in Los Angeles who married in 1963 chose an Anglo as a mate." Increasingly there is greater diversity in political tactics, ranging from "quiet fighting" to confrontative militancy. Finally, there is an increasing differentiation in in-group and out-group perceptions. They see themselves as more emotional, less materialistic, harder working, and having stronger family ties than others. They also see themselves as being less progressive and more inclined to place the blame for their problems on others, although they do believe that discrimination is lessening. Finally, cultural tenacity is not as widespread nor as powerful as literature and leadership would lead us to believe.

Grace Halsell is an Anglo woman who, on various assignments, posed as a Black, an illegal, and a Native American. For Grace Halsell, at least, the Black experience was more like the White than the Native American:

Sometimes people ask what was more difficult—living as a black woman or as Bessie Yellowhair?

I found the Indian experience more difficult.

For my "Soul Sister" experience, I had changed myself cosmetically, but I was always me—that is, a person raised with the same values and judgments all of us, black and white, have grown to share. We've been taught to want the good things in life, as we define them—good salary, good house, good car, a good carpet on the floor.

But the Indian has a different set of values—he worships the land, his Mother Earth. He never attempts to conquer nature, but to live in harmony with it. He wishes to be like a fish in the sea or a bird on the wing—to pass by without leaving a trace of his existence.

Being—not achieving—is what is important to the Indian.

None of this means that Americans are or ought to be culturally alike. It does mean that many more variables are at work than simply ethnic heritage. Mexicans arriving at a migrant labor camp from rural Mexico are very different culturally from Mexican-Americans. Grace Halsell admires the illegals for their culture values, as yet relatively untarnished by technological materialism:

Most of the Mexican illegals we arrest are what we would call simple people.

This has certain advantages. They have not as yet been moulded by modern industrialism. They are a people, as the Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca put it, "with their hearts in their heads."

The Mexicans in this country generally have known every difficulty, every hardship, every suffering. Yet they bravely see joy as an object of life. They speak up for joy in their music, in their dance, in their literature, their poetry—and in their ability to see any work, well done, as honorable work.

The Anglo majority has always praised the stoicism and *joie de vivre* of the underclass, whether Blacks or Okies or Hispanics. This is a complex phenomenon, sometimes having to do with hypocrisy and envy. At worst, it is a way for the dominant group to assuage its guilty conscience, as if to say, "See, our exploitation isn't so bad because they still sing and dance." At best, though, as with Grace Halsell, this genuine admiration of other cultures is a reminder that we may have at least as much to learn from newcomers as we have to teach.

Class Strife

The United States has always prided itself on its non-ideological politics. Although Eugene Debs polled nearly a million votes for the Socialist Party in the Presidential election of 1912, the deportation of radicals by Attorney-General Palmer after World War One was part of a repression that put an end to effective political action based on working class activism. Both the Republican and Democratic parties hew to the middle of the spectrum, giving welcome stability to a pluralistic culture. However, this has tempted us to ignore economic antagonism as a motive force in American life.

The heroic struggles of the Black civil rights movement in the 1950s, the coming of age of Italian-Americans in politics and culture, the election of an Irish Catholic to the presidency in 1960, the slow recognition of the horror of the Nazi holocaust, all of these things brought attention to ethnic aspects of American life. Ethnicity and race have been, are, and will be important matters.

However, we must not allow our legitimate interest in cultural diversity to blind us to the constant struggle between the haves and the have-nots. Studies show that members of every

ethnic group—Irish, Jewish, Black—begin to vote Republican when their income gets high enough for their economic interests to dominate their traditional cultural affiliation. Employers often used ethnic antagonisms to break strikes and hamper union organizing. The interplay between poverty and ethnicity is terribly complex, until it defies easy generalization.

J. Anthony Lukas won a National Book Award for *Common Ground*, a non-fiction study of court-ordered busing in Boston. Lukas looked at three families: one Black, one Irish, one patrician WASP. The patrician began with the simple assumption that racial strife in Boston was based on bigotry and ignorance, on race and law. As the underlying problems continued to defy logical or legal solutions, the patrician broadened his outlook:

As the decade wore on, Colin came to perceive this "American dilemma" less in purely racial and legal terms, more in class and economic terms. Whenever he looked he saw legal remedies undercut by social and economic realities. Only by providing jobs and other economic opportunities for the deprived—black and white alike—could the city reduce the deep sense of grievance harbored by both communities, alleviate some of the antisocial behavior grounded in such resentments, and begin to close the terrible gap between the rich and the poor, the suburb and the city, the hopeful and the hopeless.

Here is a similar observation from *Sweatshops in the Sun* in which a Chicano is unable to separate his ethnic antagonisms from his economic animosities:

From his conversation and from talks with the school officials it became obvious the school was no worse than most: Anglo-norteamericano middle-class values prevail. This is the system that teaches English by banning Spanish. This is the system that conveys the neat, orderly, well-financed suburban atmosphere where competition is the key to success. This is the system that is benevolently brought to the poor—or the poor are transported to it. This is the system run by \$20,000 to \$30,000-a-year Anglos who owe their jobs to school boards made up of doctors, lawyers, farmers, and realtors.

Migrant Educators do not have the luxury of assuming that the middle class values of the schools, or even middle class language patterns, are

automatically superior to those of the poor. Some linguists consider typical academic English to be turgid and jargon-ridden, different from but not superior to the more direct speech of the poor. Here is an excerpt from an ERIC document which argues that Mexican-Americans are being taught to use a middle class English that is in fact not very effective even for the white middle class:

Before we impose middle-class verbal style upon children from other cultural groups, we should find out how much of this is useful for the main work of analyzing and generalizing, and how much is merely stylistic—or even dysfunctional. In high school and college, middle-class children spontaneously complicate their syntax to the point that instructors despair of getting them to make their language simpler and clearer. In every learned journal one can find examples of jargon and empty elaboration—and complaints about it. Is the "elaborated code" really so "flexible, detailed, and subtle" as some psychologists believe? Is it not simply an elaborated style, rather than a superior code or system?

Our work in the speech community makes it painfully obvious that in many ways working-class speakers are more effective narrators, reasoners, and debaters than many middle-class speakers who temporize, qualify, and lose their argument in a mass of irrelevant detail. Many academic writers try to rid themselves of that part of middle-class style that is empty pretension, and keep that part that is needed for precision. But the average middle-class speaker that we encounter makes no such effort; he is enmeshed in verbiage, the victim of sociolinguistic factors beyond his control.

Genuine Multiculturalism

Migrant Educators and all educators must foster a genuine respect for the cultural identities of all students, particularly for those we define as disadvantaged. Some of what has been called detrimental was in fact merely different, merely unfamiliar to the mainstream teacher or administrator. Here is Frank Reissman's description of real respect for the different cultural manifestations associated with poverty:

I have used phrases such as "understand and respect" the culture, "begin with the interests of the underprivi-

leged," and so on. In conclusion, let me state briefly the three levels that are involved in this approach:

1. At the simplest level, the approach requires a recognition of the education deficiencies that result from the life conditions of the underprivileged. Here would be included the confusion and ambivalence about education, the limited reading ability, the fear of failure, the inadequate test-taking skills, and lack of school know-how.
2. At the next level the approach calls attention to the fact that the underprivileged have specific interests, like science, automobiles, sports, and that these interests can be used as "openers" for developing education understanding. Under this heading, too, would be included role-playing and other physical and visual techniques. It is a common mistake for the teacher to believe that she need only recognize these interests in order to make contact with the child. She may find any genuine appreciation of these "low level" interests impossible for her. If the teacher cannot in any way appreciate the interests of the deprived, it will be difficult for her to see any possible continuity between these interests and advanced education; consequently, the recognition of differences in background, while it may lead to a pleasanter classroom atmosphere, does not necessarily produce real education progress.
3. The highest level is what we call the "cultural approach," by which we mean a genuine respect for the efforts of the deprived in coping with difficult life conditions. Many of the institutions and values that characterize the life of disadvantaged groups have arisen from these efforts. While some of these traditions have proven more effective than others, many of them, it seems to us, deserve some measure of respect. Under this heading we would include the extended family, the cooperative and equalitarian traditions, the anger and alienation, the desire for structure, the informality, and humor.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm that understanding traditions does not require that we be uncritical of them. This is particularly pertinent with regard to the anti-intellectualism and narrow practicality of the deprived.

In the context of basic respect and approval, criticism can be most welcome.

National Policy

Migrant Educators are citizens. As citizens, they have a responsibility to work toward an enlightened national policy regarding migrant workers. Here is a blunt description of the situation from Migrant:

For too many farmworkers life is poor, nasty, brutish, and short. Too many farmworkers are present-day slaves, subservient to and dependent upon the fluctuations of economics, the whims of growers, the vagaries of weather, the march of technology, and the decisions of government. This condition is the predictable consequence of economic and political powerlessness.

The firsthand accounts of the lives of east coast migrants presented in this book point out the glaring contrast between the nation of plenty which most of us take for granted, and the demeaned, undignified, impoverished, and joyless existence of the harvesters on whom we depend for our daily food. Except for an occasional television documentary, we seem oblivious to the hundreds of thousands of uneducated, unemployable, sick, malnourished, poorly housed, and hopeless victims who are living in the shadows of the economic and political system of the most affluent society in history.

To some extent, Migrant Education programs are merely a band-aid applied to an injury requiring a tourniquet and major surgery. Despite all the work of Migrant Educators, the plight of America's migrants remains a national disgrace.

This course cannot recommend solutions to the larger problems of migrancy. Some issues are specific, such as immigration legislation. Grace Halsell suggests that we help Mexico provide jobs for Mexicans in Mexico:

Meanwhile, we continue to spend at least \$250 million on our no-win war against the undocumented workers. There is the cost of parole and probation, and of incarceration in city and county jails, in four detention camps, and in our federal prisons. Two of the latter, La Tuna near El Paso and one in Stafford, Arizona, are almost entirely for illegals. Then there are the huge costs of all the deportation hearings. In addition are the costs of transporting

thousands of men from one jail to another.

An average Mexican illegal could feed his family for a month for what it costs us to keep him in detention for one day. Tens of thousands of landless Mexican farmers earn less than \$75 a year. Yet, when we lock one up, it costs us an average of \$22 a day or about \$8,000 per year in prison costs alone.

The millions we spend on protecting our border, sending work-hungry Mexicans to prison or deporting them, could more profitably be spent in creating jobs to keep them in Mexico.

In the nineteenth century, we took land from Texas to California as part of our Manifest Destiny. We also got the Spanish-speaking people who were living on that vast Mexican territory. And others who would come later. The people, as well as the land, we now must realize, are part of our destiny—there is no way we can seal the border. It is too late. Too late because we have always wanted, and benefitted from, an open door.

Most of the illegals are coming here from six dry, high plateau states in Mexico. And most say they would not come here if they could find work in Mexico. I think there is only one solution to the problem: we must work

with Mexico, and help Mexico find ways to keep its citizens at home, which it wants to do.

Interesting as this notion is, and much as Mexico could use our help, the lure of the good life in the United States will continue to attract masses from south of the border.

Helen L. Johnston and Robert Coles, among others, argue that we need a national policy to get our crops harvested without leaving over a million people homeless. This is from *Uprooted Children*:

Even many animals define themselves by where they live, by the territory they possess or covet or choose to forsake in order to find new land, a new sense of control and self-sufficiency, a new dominion. It is utterly part of our nature to want roots, to need roots, to struggle for roots, for a sense of belonging, for some place that is recognized as mine, as yours, as ours. Nations, regions, states, counties, cities, towns—all of them have to do with politics and geography and history; but they are more than that, for they somehow reflect man's humanity, his need to stay someplace and live there and get to know—a lot, actually: other people, to varying extents, and what I suppose can be called a particular environment or space or neighborhood or world or set of circumstances. It is bad enough that thousands of us, thousands of American children, still go hungry and sick and are ignored and spurned—everyday and constantly and just about from birth to death. It is quite another thing, another order, as it were, of human degradation, that we also have thousands of boys and girls who live utterly uprooted lives, who wander the American earth, who enable us to eat by harvesting our crops—yes, as children they do—but who never, never think of any place as home, of themselves as anything but homeless. There are moments, and I believe this is one of them, when even doctors or social scientists or observers or whoever justly have to throw up their hands in heaviness of heart and dismay and disgust and say, in desperation: God save them, those children; and for allowing such a state of affairs to continue, God save us, too.

You are not required to solve continental problems that have defied solution for generations. You should remember, though, that in addition to teaching the



children of migrants as much as we can, we have a responsibility to link the lives of migrants to the larger community. This must be done educationally, economically, politically. Stanley Charnofsky says migrants must be full participants in society, not merely recipients of its aid. Migrants need and deserve what the rest of us need and deserve, prestige and security and noble dreams in addition to intelligent and humane teachers, worthwhile work, and decent homes. Your job as a Migrant Educator begins when you work to improve the skills of your students, to help them realize their full potential as human beings. Where your job as a Migrant Educator ends is impossible to predict. You will discover the scope of your commitment as you grow into your career as a Migrant Educator.

We cannot apologize for a relentless impatience to improve education. We can never settle for 'business as usual.' We cannot merely write learned papers for the edification of our colleagues and the enhancement of our own professional image, or for the enlargement of our income. Our schools are not as good as they might be; they are not as good as they need to be; and it is our job to make them better. The verdict of our colleagues on us will count as nothing compared to the verdict of history on our civilization.

Robert B. Davis, in 1967

Individual Attention

An individual's language is as individual as a fingerprint. This presents a problem for teachers who must balance the needs of individual students against the needs of the group. Just be sure there is a balance, that the individual does not get swamped. Kathy McNally of KQED reported on bilingualism for the McNeil/Lehrer Newshour on August 26, 1986, about California's challenge. The scope of the difficulty is awesome. By 1990, over half of the students will not be fluent in English. Ms. McNally told of some students who arrived from Laos in 1979 and 1980. They were assigned to bilingual classes taught in Laotian. It was five years before the schools caught on that these children were from a mountain tribe that did not speak Laotian.

The confusion is understandable. The

delay is more puzzling. You must talk to your students, face to face, one on one, often enough to have a fresh impression of the language skills of each. These can be casual chats, but they must allow the child to use the language. If you find a child with whom you cannot communicate because of language, you find someone who speaks that child's language, whether that is Spanish or French or Tigrinya or an obscure dialect from the mountains of Laos. We cannot expect children to solve these problems without adult help. However you organize your class, be sure you provide time for individual attention.

"The Lemon Grove Incident"

On July 23, 1930, the school board in Lemon Grove, California, a small community near San Diego, decided to establish a separate school for the Hispanic community, thereby segregating a school system that had until then been integrated. This incident and its far-reaching consequences were the subject of a TV documentary written and produced by Paul Espinosa, first broadcast by PBS on September 17, 1986. This program, which illuminates important aspects of bilingualism issues, should soon be available on videotape.

"The Lemon Grove Incident" reminds us that American education had a bizarre caste structure within living memory. The show blends dramatized scenes with interviews of people who took part in the affair half a century ago. Under the rules of the game as then played, Blacks and Asians and Native Americans attended segregated schools, but Mexican-Americans were legally defined as caucasians. Many communities in the southwest established "Americanization" schools or classrooms for Mexican-Americans, even for those who were citizens and spoke English. This de facto segregation was what the school board, with the backing of the PTA and the Chamber of Commerce, wished to establish in Lemon Grove.

The Mexican-American community organized a boycott of the segregated school and took the case to court. Elements of the Anglo community tried to intimidate the Mexican-Americans, even deporting some of them, but the boycott held and the case was won. The Mexican-American victory at Lemon Grove helped put a stop to the Bliss

Amendment, an attempt to have Mexican-Americans classified as Native Americans so they could be legally segregated. Eventually all the "Americanization" schools were declared unconstitutional, an important step toward the total desegregation ordered by *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954.

The Lemon Grove case is heartening evidence that the United States can transcend its nativist impulses, that the system can implement its ideals as policy. In an interview on "All Things Considered," Paul Espinosa warned that while the mechanisms of discrimination change, the discrimination itself persists, often in forms that are more difficult to confront. If a school system uses tracking and very few Mexican-Americans find themselves on the fastest track, is that discrimination? Let us work together in ways that make us confident that the approaches we use today, and the rationales we devise to defend them, do not sound as shoddy fifty years from now as the 1930 arguments of the Lemon Grove school board in favor of segregation sound to us today.

If we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.

John F. Kennedy

Diversity is as American as pizza pie, but not all Americans are entirely comfortable with it. As we go to press, voters in California are getting ready to vote yes or no on Proposition 63 which if passed would make English the official language of the state. Proposition 63 has the support of the lobby group "USENGLISH," former Senator S.I. Hayakawa, and others who oppose bilingualism in theory and practice. By the time you read this, we should know whether Proposition 63 passed or failed in the autumn of 1986. Politically, the voters will have had their say. Educationally, the debate will rage on.

From a purely pedagogical standpoint, educators may be in danger of botching a marvelous opportunity because it has been misdiagnosed as a problem. Study upon study has concluded that the United States must improve its teaching of foreign languages, and the presence of native speakers of those tongues in our schools is a potentially invaluable asset.

This is not a new controversy. Every new group to enter the American main-

stream has been perceived as a threat by a significant segment of the people who got here ahead of them. In the case of the Native Americans who got here first, that apprehension was valid enough, but since the founding of the Republic such fears have proven hysterical.

When the Irish arrived at the time of the Great Famine, nativists and Know Nothings put up signs reading "No Irish need apply." When slaves were freed, the KKK and Jim Crow laws denied them their rights. The great wave of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe at the turn of the century provoked nativist tracts, immigration quotas, and standardized tests. During the 'Twenties, Hispanics in the southwest were segregated into so-called "Americanization" schools and classrooms, educational ghettos from which it was virtually impossible to escape even when the children were native born citizens who spoke flawless English.

"There is no new thing under the sun," according to *Ecclesiastes 1:9*. This current furor over bilingualism may dismay but cannot amaze anyone familiar with American history. Migrant Educators must try to defuse this issue by placing it in its historical context and by reminding everyone of the obvious,

that the United States thrives on diversity, that *pluribus* is our path toward *unum*.

Above all, we must remember that the hegemony of English is not threatened, not in the schools, not in the streets. Anyone who saw Robert McNeil's "The Story of English" on PBS in the fall of 1986 will realize that American English is the *lingua franca* of the whole planet. Six centuries after Chaucer, four centuries after Shakespeare, two centuries after Jefferson, English is alive and well. The newest immigrants are as eager to learn English as the earlier waves were. What has changed is pedagogy: we no longer favor sink-or-swim because we have learned too much about language acquisition and the central role of language in identity and self-esteem. We must be humane to be effective.

California is truly polyglot, with many Asian dialects to consider, but the major issue is English versus Spanish. As such, it is or ought to be a false issue. The tension between the Spanish and the English in the Americas has endured for nearly five centuries now. As educators, we must work to reduce that tension. We need not be apologetic. The English language has always been enriched by intimate contact with other tongues. It was not

unseated by Viking invaders before 1000 or by the French conquest in 1066. It has absorbed vocabulary from virtually every tongue on earth. Spanish is, as the song title reminds us, a loving tongue, the language of Cervantes, of Lope de Vega, of Federico Garcia Lorca and Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Pablo Neruda and Jorge Luis Borges and too many other great writers to list. The Spanish language will enrich American English and American culture as surely as Latin music has given vitality to our pop idioms from the tango and samba to the newest Paul Simon album with the participation of Los Lobos.

These booklets have been advocating tolerance of diversity. Perhaps that is too timid. Mere tolerance is the *sine qua non* of our survival as a nation. Americans should glory in diversity, all sorts of diversity including linguistic, glory in it, wallow in it, bask in it, frolic in it, delight in it. Young people can master English without renouncing their native language. Solid evidence suggests that retention of and respect for the original tongue result in better mastery of English. Educationally, bilingualism is a valid way to strengthen both our schools and our society.



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The Mentor Project is under the aegis of the New York State Department of Education's Migrant Unit. Richard A. Bove, Chief. Funding is from a 143 grant by the U.S. Department of Education. Mentor was conceived by Dr. William Q. Davis of Potsdam College. Mentor courses and materials were developed, written, and edited by Ken Lawless.

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Low-Cost or Free Publications:
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 Center for Applied Linguistics
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 (Four-page briefs on numerous countries of the world: customs, history, government)
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Sample Bibliographies and Directories (available from NCBE)

A Bibliography of Resources in Bilingual Education: Curricular Materials, 1980, 334 pages, over 400 entries, P24, \$10.25.

NCBE Products List: An Annotated Bibliography of Materials and Services Available from NCBE, 1985, 16 pages, 150 entries, free.

Second Language Learning Among Young Children: A Bibliography of Research, 1981, 78 pages, 90 entries, P43, \$7.40.

Tests and Testing for Bilingual Children: A Bibliography of Literature 1982, 80 pages, 85 entries, P50, \$7.40.

Photographic Exhibition/Lecture

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Network TV

CBS, "One River, One Country," 1986. Bill Moyers looks at the immigration issue in Texas.

PBS, "The Lemon Grove Incident," 1986.

Music

If your Spanish is good, you might listen to Ruben Blades, a Panamanian whose original songs illuminate Latin concerns. He was the star of the 1984 film *Crossover Dreams*.

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